Quotes

“Do the things that interest you and do them with all your heart. Don't be concerned about whether people are watching you or criticizing you. The chances are that they aren't paying any attention to you. It's your attention to yourself that is so stultifying. But you have to disregard yourself as completely as possible. If you fail the first time then you'll just have to try harder the second time. After all, there's no real reason why you should fail. Just stop thinking about yourself.”

— Eleanor Roosevelt

“Like a wild animal, the soul is tough, resilient, resourceful, savvy, and self-sufficient: it knows how to survive in hard places. I learned about these qualities during my bouts with depression. In that deadly darkness, the faculties I had always depended on collapsed. My intellect was useless; my emotions were dead; my will was impotent; my ego was shattered. But from time to time, deep in the thickets of my inner wilderness, I could sense the presence of something that knew how to stay alive even when the rest of me wanted to die. That something was my tough and tenacious soul.”

— Parker J. Palmer

“I believe children have the resilience to outlive their sufferings if given a chance.”

— Ishmael Beah, A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier

“It demands great spiritual resilience not to hate the hater whose foot is on your neck, and an even greater miracle of perception and charity not to teach your child to hate.”

— James Baldwin

“You cannot change the wind, but you can adjust the sails.”

— Unknown

“In the end, love wins. It does win. We know it wins. When a person dies, love isn’t turned off like a faucet. It is an amazingly resilient part of us.”

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“If we are to have a culture as resilient and competent in the face of necessity as it needs to be, then it must somehow involve within itself a ceremonious generosity toward the wilderness of natural force and instinct. The farm must yield a place to the forest, not as a wood lot, or even as a necessary agricultural principle but as a sacred grove - a place where the Creation is let alone, to serve as instruction, example, refuge; a place for people to go, free of work and presumption, to let themselves alone.”
— Wendell Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays*

“Yes, and the body has memory. The physical carriage hauls more than its weight. The body is the threshold across which each objectionable call passes into consciousness—all the unintimidated, unblinking, and unflappable resilience does not erase the moments lived through, even as we are eternally stupid or everlastingly optimistic, so ready to be inside, among, a part of the games.”
— Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric*

“The refusal to feel takes a heavy toll. Not only is there an impoverishment of our emotional and sensory life, flowers are dimmer and less fragrant, our loves less ecstatic but this psychic numbing also impedes our capacity to process and respond to information. The energy expended in pushing down despair is diverted from more creative uses, depleting the resilience and imagination needed for fresh visions and strategies. ”
— Joanna Macy

“What didn’t you do to bury me, but you forgot that I was a seed.”
— Dinos Christianopoulos, Greek poet (translated)

“This has been my vocation to make music of what remains.”
—Itzhak Perlman, Israeli-American violin virtuoso

“The world breaks everyone, and afterward, some are strong at the broken places.”
— Ernest Hemingway
“Someone was hurt before you, wronged before you, hungry before you, frightened before you, beaten before you, humiliated before you, raped before you…yet, someone survived. You can do anything you choose to do.”
— Maya Angelou

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.”
— Helen Keller

“If you’re going through hell, keep going.”
— Winston Churchill

“Resilience is very different than being numb. Resilience means you experience, you feel, you fail, you hurt. You fall. But, you keep going.”
— Yasmin Mogahed, writer and international speaker

“The resilience and spirit that carried our people to this day is what will carry us to our next great moment. Our cultures are resolute and divers. We see every challenge as an opportunity.”
— Jefferson Keel, National Congress of American Indians

“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”
— Charles Darwin

“I can accept failure; everyone fails at something. But I can't accept not trying.”
— Michael Jordan

"All of us who are openly gay are living and writing the history of our movement. We are no more - and no less - heroic than the suffragists and abolitionists of the 19th century; and the labor organizers, Freedom Riders, Stonewall demonstrators, and environmentalists of the 20th century. We are ordinary people, living our lives, and trying as civil-rights activist Dorothy Cotton said, to 'fix what ain't right' in our society."
— Senator Tammy Baldwin

“Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life; define yourself."
“I will not have my life narrowed down. I will not bow down to somebody else’s whim or to someone else’s ignorance.”
—Alice Walker

"If a bullet should enter my brain, let that bullet destroy every closet door."
—Harvey Milk

“You might think that people who have the capacity to withstand stress without breaking, or have inner strength and mental fortitude are resilient. But, the research says resilience is more about what happens between us than what happens within us. That it is communities that get us back on our feet, and social networks that help us to adapt and change to new conditions. Qualities such as warmth, expressiveness and empathy make these connections that help us become resilient. Qualities we can learn.”
—Rev. Jill Cowie, Harvard Unitarian Universalist Church

Poetry

Lodged
Robert Frost

The rain to the wind said,
'You push and I'll pelt.'
They so smote the garden bed.
That the flowers actually knelt,
And lay lodged -- though not dead.
I know how the flowers felt.
Still I Rise
Maya Angelou
You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your
hatefulness,

But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the
tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and
fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously
clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors
gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the
slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Try to Praise the Mutilated World
Adam Zagajewski

Try to praise the mutilated world.
Remember June's long days,
and wild strawberries, drops of rosé wine.
The nettles that methodically overgrow
the abandoned homesteads of exiles.
You must praise the mutilated world.
You watched the stylish yachts and ships;
one of them had a long trip ahead of it,
while salty oblivion awaited others.
You've seen the refugees going nowhere,
you've heard the executioners sing joyfully.
You should praise the mutilated world.
Remember the moments when we were together
in a white room and the curtain fluttered.
Return in thought to the concert where music flared.
You gathered acorns in the park in autumn
and leaves eddied over the earth's scars.
Praise the mutilated world
and the gray feather a thrush lost,
and the gentle light that strays and vanishes
and returns.

**Wild Geese**
Mary Oliver
You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
For a hundred miles through the desert,
repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of
your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about your despair, yours, and I
will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear
pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the
clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how
lonely,
the world offers itself to your
imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh
and exciting —
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.
The Rose that Grew from Concrete
Tupac Shakur

Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete? Proving nature’s law is wrong it learned to walk without having feet. Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams, it learned to breathe fresh air. Long live the rose that grew from concrete when no one else ever cared.

Reflection Questions

When do you know you are experiencing resilience in your life?
What does it feel like to be part of a resilient community?
What is something you can do every day to help you become more resilient?